

critical digest

139 East 47 St. NY 17 NY
EL 5-6894 T. M. Kraus



Jan 9, 1957 Vol IX No 10 The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter \$25 year \$6.50 quarter

This Week

Capacity for Wings-
Royal 62 E 4. 1/9. Mark
Productions present new
play by M. C. Kurer based
on Alcestis legend. With
Russell Gold, William Grif-
fis, Woody Parker.

A Clearing in the
Woods-Belasco 1/10
Roger Stevens & Oliver
Smith present new fan-
tasy by Arthur Laurents.
With Kim Stanley, Joan Lor-
ring, directed by Joseph
Anthony.

Easter-4th St-83 E 4
1/16. Davis Ross revival
of Strindberg play trans-
lated by Elizabeth Spriggs.
With Phyllis Love, Peggy
McKay and Davis Ross.

The Waltz of the Tor-
readers-Coronet 1/17
Producers Theatre pres-
ents new comedy-drama by
Jean Anouilh, English ver-
sion by Lucienne Hill. With
Ralph Richardson, Mildred
Natwick, Meriel Forbes.
Harold Clurman director.

Next Week

In Good King Charles-
Golden Days-Downtown
85 E 4. 1/21

Waiting for Godot-
Barrymore 1/21

Measure for Measure-
Phoenix 1/22

Digests of Current NYC Theatre Reviews

The River Line-Carnegie Hall Playhouse 1/2. 2 pro
notices, one mild pro and 2 con notices filed on Charles
Morgan philosophical play presented by Lortel, Friedman,
and Boetticher. Atkinson, Times, and McClain, Journal Amer-
ican, recommended play featuring Beatrice Straight, Gene
Lyons and Peter Cookson. Former found something tender
and affecting in the characters developed, though he agreed
that situation was contrived. Latter thought author has clut-
tered up a fine melodramatic idea with ceaseless and pre-
tentious talk, thought he recommended it as a provocative
evening Off Broadway with an exceptional cast. Watts, Post,
okayed second act as excellent melodrama, but feared rest
of play talked itself to death. Kerr, Herald Tribune, and
Donnelley, World Telegram & Sun, panned proceedings. Her-
ald Tribune feared it was more of a novel than a play. While
WT & S aisle-sitter noted that either as a novelist or a play-
wright, author is one of the duller practitioners of our time.

Small War on Murray Hill-Barrymore- 1/3-1/12. 2 pro
votes and 5 con votes recorded for historical play of late
Robert E. Sherwood presented by Playwrights. It closed after
12 performances. Garson Kanin directed and cast was headed
by Jan Sterling, Leo Genn, Daniel Massey. Watts, Post, and
Chapman, News, both thought it was a delightful, charming
presentation. Times and Herald Tribune panned it for lack-
ing chiefly humor and satire the author was so adept at. A
prevailing note that is soothing genteel, is the best that Don-
nelley, WT&S, could say. McClain, Journal American, just
thought it much too talky to be of interest.

Twelfth Night-Shakespearewrights - 264 W 87. 1/4.
4 pro notices filed by revival of Bard's comedy at their
new home. Times, Herald Tribune, Journal American, WT&S,
all enjoyed lively Atkinson, Times, noted group did better with
slapstick than romantic moments. Beckley, Herald Tribune,
billed it as a resounding, if blunted, version, with 6 of cast
from group's 1954 production. Mettleome, free-wheeling,
non-classical show with many attractive performances. A
ribald and franciful revival with a refreshing disrespect
for the classical methods, summed up McClain, Journal
American. Robert Cass returns as Sir Toby Belch, while
Phillip Lawrence doubles as Sir Andrew and as the direct-
or. Roger Starr's singing as Feste drew cheers from all
of critics.

"Burlesque", banned since 1937 in NYC, only lasted a week in its new form at Columbia Theatre, 66 Second Avenue. Welcome Exile revue passed muster of NYC License Commissioner O'Connell for it had no bumps, grinds, strips or dirty jokes. Newsmen who covered opening night found it boring. Reporters, not critics, were assigned to opening. Revue closed after 7 performances. Income of \$1400 was used to pay staff, talent was unpaid for efforts.

Plays

Protective Custody closed after 3 performances... Girls of Summer closes Jan 5 ... New Year's Day matinee of Saint Joan started at 3 25 PM because Siobhan McKenna arrived late. Two week run at Coronet ends Jan 5... Clearing in the Woods switched debut to Jan 10 at Belasco... Hidden River due Jan 23 at Playhouse... Uncle Willie has \$100,000 advance... Tunnel of Love due Feb 13 at Royale... Holiday for Lovers due Feb 14 at Longacre... Sin of Pat Muldoon with James Barton due March 13... First Gentleman to be staged by Tyrone Guthrie due April 11.

Players

Eddie Bracken and Eartha Kitt to co-star in Shinbone Alley musical based on "Archy and Mehitabel"... Richard Derr and Rain Winslow featured in Liza due in March... Lola Fisher subbed for Julie Andrews in 2 Sat. performances of My Fair Lady... Ruth Draper died at age 72 from heart attack. She had opened a 4 week stand at Playhouse earlier the same week (see Draper Obit-Pg 4.)

Other Broadways

Palm Tree Playhouse, Sarosta, Fla opens 13 week winter stock season Jan 8 ... Holiday for Lovers Wilmington, Del. debut Jan 12 can be viewed by NY fans via Bingler Tours trip costing \$14.95 for transit, dinner and ticket. 203 W 41... Boston critics will participate in Jan 11 forum on Waiting for Godot after performance.

Theatre TV Notes

Mickey Rooney will replace George M. Cohan in NBC TV "George M. Cohan Story" May 11... Annie Get Your Gun with Mary Martin will be presented on NBC TV in Nov '57, she will also appear in an April production yet to be decided upon... Porgy and Bess will be presented in two parts on NBC TV next season.

Theatre Film Notes

Separate Tables film to be produced by Hecht-Lancaster will feature Laurence Olivier and Vivian Leigh, Olivier directing ... Olivier also featured in Hecht-Lancaster production of The Devil's Disciple with Montgomery Clift and Burt Lancaster... Paul Ford to co-star in The Matchmaker film with Shirley Booth.

Theatre Magazine Notes

Jan. '57 issue of Cosmopolitan has several articles on current Broadway scene covering---talent agency, press agent, Palace, Astor Hotel, etc.

Theatre Book Notes

"Michael Redgrave-Actor" published by Theatre Arts Books. Author is Richard Findlater.

Vaudeville

Palace will change vaude show weekly to Feb 8 Jerry Lewis opening ... Pat Rooney, Sr & Jr, Chaz Chase, Corinne & Revel, Ladd Lyon, Donna Grescoe and Kelroys are featured this week.



London Theatre



Plays

Next Old Vic production opens Jan 22, Two Gentlemen of Verona directed by Michael Langham with Robert Helpmann, Keith Mitchell, Dudley Jones and Rosemary Webster... Third York Festival of the Arts to be held July 1957 with E. Martin Browne staging the 600 year old plays... Champagne Punch by Bernard Delfont opens Jan 24 at Pigalle, staged by Robert Nesbitt... The Cloak and Blood Will Out move from Hovenden Theatre Club to New Lindsay.

Players

Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh considering appearing in Shakespeare Memorial Theatre visit to Yugoslavia next summer in Titus Andronicus... Patricia Webb replaces Anne Rogers, The Boy Friend, Feb 4... Marion Grimaldi has replaced Diana Maddox in Under Milk Wood.

Comments

Going to a play in England means so much more than a mere social outing or a date in connection with business, as it is mostly in US, Tyrone Power told "Stage." Currently in The Devil's Disciple, he also noted that compared with US, British audiences are large, regular and well-informed.

Calender

Jan 14-The Bridal Habit, Empire,
Peterborough... Jan 22-- Two Gentle-
man of Verona-Old Vic.

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Jan 9, 1985; PLAYGOER'S GUIDE chart of CRITICAL DIGEST-139 E 47, NYC- EL 5-6894

This weekly chart of CRITICAL DIGEST, the weekly NYC theatre newsletter, presents up-to-date data on current business and critical reception of all current Broadway and Off Broadway shows. Subscribers to CRITICAL DIGEST may write or phone for any other specific data or for late reviews.

"C"-Criticals-figures refer to percentage of PRO reviews filed by NYC daily drama critics. PRO means show was recommended as entertaining and/or stimulating, not if critic predicted if show would be a hit.

"B"-Business-figures refer to percentage and gross ticket sales of past week and preceding weeks. "F"-figures refer to past week's attendance. "CAP"- figures refer to capacity of house. Figures that follow are gross estimates by Variety for past week and preceding weeks. All figures are in thousands of dollars. Thus "Cap \$41--\$51--\$50" means that capacity of house is \$41,000, that past week's gross was \$51,000 and week before \$50,000.

APPLE CART 235 W 45
Cf 6-9156
Plymouth \$5.75
AUNTIE MAME 238 W 44
Cf 6-6699
Broadhurst \$5.75
BELLS ARE RINGING 230 W 44
Shubert \$7.50
Cf 6-5990
CANDIDE 310 W 45
Beck \$8.05
DAMN YANKEE 226 W 46
Cf 6-4271
DIARY A. FRANK 138 W 48
Cf 5-4289
Cort \$5.75
HAPPIEST MILLION. 160 W 45
Lycium \$5.75
JU 2-3897
HAPPY HUNTING 245 W 45
Majestic \$8.05
Cf 6-0730
INHERIT WIND 208 E 41
PE 6-0220
National \$5.75
LIL ABNER 235 W 44
St James \$8.05
LA 1-4664
LONG DAYS JOURNEY 230 W 46
Hayes \$6.90
Cf 6-6380

MAJOR BARBARA 245 W 45
Cf 6-6230
Morosco \$6.90
MATCHMAKER 245 W 41
Cf 6-5969
Booth \$5.75
MIDDLE NIGHT 250 W 52
Cf 6-8870
ANTA \$5.75
MOST HAPPY FELLA 246 W 45
Imperial \$7.50
CO 5-2412
MR. WONDERFUL 1681 Bway
Broadway \$7.50
Cf 7-2887
MY FAIR LADY 1685 Bway
Heilinger \$8.05
PL 7-7054
NO TIME SOFS 250 W 52
Alvin \$5.75
Cf 5-5226
RELUCTANT DEB 123 W 43
Miller \$5.75
BR 9-3970
SEPARATE TABLES 236 W 45
Music Box \$5.75
Cf 6-4636
SPEAKING MURDER 252 W 45
Royale \$5.75
Cf 5-5760
UNCLE WILLIE 252 W 45
Golden \$5.75
Cf 6-6740
OLD VIC 1680 Bway
W. Garden \$5.75
Cf 5-4078

70% C- 2 Cons- Times, Tribune
90% B- Cap \$37--\$25 \$31 \$34 \$37 \$37 \$37
90% C- Watta Post, filed sole con review
70% B- Cap \$31--\$19 \$13 \$17 \$18 \$19 \$18
20% C- 2 Pro Play-Mir, J. Am. 100% Robinson
90% B- Cap \$38--\$34 \$23 \$27 \$32 \$34 \$38 \$38
90% C- Tribune, sole con voter on musical
100% B- Cap \$57--\$57 \$45 \$52 \$57 \$57 \$57
10% C- Chapman, News, sole pro, 100% Davis
75% B- Cap \$71--\$51--\$21 \$27 \$35 \$41 \$45
100% C- Unanimous raves for hit musical
100% B- Cap \$64--\$64 \$64 \$64 \$64 \$64 \$64
100% C- Unanimous praise soldier comedy
80% B- Cap \$18--\$12 \$24 \$28 \$34 \$34 \$37
90% C- 1 Con, WT & S, on English comedy
95% B- Cap \$27--\$14 \$10 \$12 \$19 \$19 \$21 \$24
100% C- Unanimous praise for Eng. twin-bill
95% B- Cap \$41--\$29 \$29 \$29 \$31 \$31 \$31 \$31
70% C- 2 Cons- Mirror, WT & S
30% C- Cap \$45--\$10--\$15
100% C for M. Shulst, 0% C minus him
70% B- Cap \$24--\$15 \$15
Richard II- 3 Cons- Trib, News, WT & S
Roméo- 2 Cons- Post, WT & S
Troilus- 2 Cons- Times, Trib
Macbeth- 1 Cons- Tribune.

BROADWAY

GOOD WOMAN	12 & 2nd	2 Pro-Times, J. Am.
Phoenix \$3.45	AL 5-5925	4 Con- Trib. News, Post, WT & S
ICEMAN COMETH	5 Sher Sq	6 Pro-Times, Trib, Mirror, J. Am, WT & S, Post
Circle \$1.60	OR 5-9437	
EAGLE HAS 2 HEADS	100-7th Av S	
Actors Playhouse \$2.40	OR 5-1037	3 Con- Times, Post, WT & S
ME CANDIDO	131 W 13	5 Pro-Times, Trib, Post, Variety, Women Wear
G. News	CH 2-9831	
MISANTHROPE	231 E 60	6 Pro-Times, Mir, Post, WT & S, Variety, WWD
T. East \$3.45	TE 2-9220	
PURPLE DUST	31 Commerce	4 Pro-Times, Trib, Post, WT & S
Cherry Lane \$3.85	CH 2-4448	2 Con- News, J. Am.
SH-H-H	122 E 42	
Chasin \$3.40	MU 2-9662	8 Con- Post, WT & S
SHOESTRING '57	59 & 6th	3 Pro-Times, Trib, News, Mir, Post, WT&S,
B. Plaza \$3.60	CI 7-7000	1 Con- J. Am.
TAKE GIANT STEP	351 E 74	5 Pro-Times, Trib, Post, Women Wear, Variety
Jan Jus \$3.45	LY 6-5947	1 Con- J. Am.
TITUS ANDRONICUS	729 E 6	2 Pro-WT & S, Variety
Shakes, Workshop	MO 5-0794	1 Con- Times
3 PENNY OPERA	121 Chris.	3 Pro-Times, Trib, Post
De Lutz \$4.85	WA 4-8782	

" RATINGS OF NYC CRITICS "

1956-57 season ratings of NYC drama critics on CURRENT Broadway Shows by Critical Digest. 100% figures are percentage of pro votes in comparison to con votes on current shows. Variety 1955-56 and 1954-55 season figures are percentages of favorable reviews written for entire season.

	C.D. %	PROS	CONS	Variety 1955-56	1954-55
Atkinson, Times	80%	19	4	.490	.607
Kerr, H. Tribune	55%	14	9	.354	.354
Chapman, News	50%	21	2	.527	.580
Colman, Mirror	50%	21	2	.454	.566
Watts, Post	20%	5	1	.425	.541
McClain, J. Am.	75%	18	5	.535	.532
Donnelly, W.T. & S. (Hawkins 1953)	70%	17	6	.306	.549

CALENDAR " "

THEATRE

Best of Stinkbug-Playhouse 2/1
 Visit to Small Planet-Booth 2/6
 Jerry Lewis-Palace 2/7
 Doctor Faustus-Blackfriars 2/7
 Tunnel of Love-Royale 2/13
 Holiday for Lovers-Longacre 2/14
 Taming of Shrew-Phoenix 2/19
 Hole in Hand-Plymouth 2/28
 Zigzag Folies-W. Garden 2/28
 Look Back in Anger- 3/7
 Lisa- 3/7
 Sin of Pat Maidom- 3/13
 Maden Voyage- 3/14
 Strategy of Murder 3/15
 Duchess of Malfi-Phoenix 3/19
 Orpheus Descending 3/21
 Moon for Midgets-Bijos 4/1
 The Taster-Playhouse 4/18
 First Gentleman- 4/11
 Foolin' Ourselves 4/7
 New Girl in Town 5/1
 River Line-Carn. Playhouse 1/2
 Sweet Little Merry Hill-Barnmore 1/3
 Twelfth Night-Shakespearewright 1/4
 Volpone-Booth-1/7
 Shadow Years- Open Stage 1/8
 Capacity for Wings-Royal 1/9
 Clearing of the Woods-Balch 1/10
 Ideal Husband-Carl Fischer 1/10
 In Good King Charles- Downtown 1/14
 Easter-4th St 1/16
 Walls of Toredoras-Coronet 1/17
 Waiting for Godot- 1/21
 Measure for Measure-Phoenix 1/22
 Hidden River-Playhouse 1/23
 Catch a Falling Star-1/24
 Barrault & Renaud-W. Garden 1/28
 Eugene-Ambassador 1/29
 Potting Seed- Bijou 1/29
 Enemies Don't Shed-Troviach 1/31
 The Crystal Tree 1/31
 Quare Fellow-1/7

COMMUNITY THEATRE PROGRAMS "

Feb 10- NBC- The Lark with Julie Harris, Boris Karloff
Mar 4- NBC- Romeo & Juliet- Old Vic on Producers Showcase
Apr 1- NBC- The Great Sebastians- with Lunis on Producers Showcase
May 11- NBC- George M. Cohan Story- with Mickey Rooney

" C. D. VIEWS ON CURRENT SHOWS "

PROPS: Damn Yankees, Diary Anne Frank, Happiest Millionaire, inherit the Wind, Judy Garland, Long Days Journey, Most Happy Fella, Separate Tables, Old Vic, Uncle Willie.

CONS: Ickman Cometh, Mc Candido, Misanthrope, Shoestring '37, Take Giant Step



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT

RUTH DRAPER OBITS... The death of Ruth Draper removes a notable talent from our midst. She was one of those rare individuals who can command our attention for an entire evening sheerly through her own prodigious solo offerings, noted McClain, Journal American... Ruth Draper was one of the stage's supreme artists, and it's hard to realize we'll never see her again, added Watts, Post... Community Service Society director Stanley Davies recalled in Herald Tribune letter the time and talent she devoted to his organization.

FAYE VS CRITICS... Faye Emerson demanded that Atkinson, Times, and Kerr, Herald Tribune, give back their weekly paychecks because they did not write about the plot, idea, etc of the ill-fated Protective Custody. The charge was made on NBC-TV Hy Gardner show. Reviewers, she argued, did not earn salary by writing about her instead of the play itself.

COLUMN TIPS... Patricia Sales performance in Actors Studio reading of Waiting For Godot knocked observers for a loop, reports Kilgallen, Journal American... Speaking of Murder noisy ending annoying 3 nearby play, notes Lyons, Post... An Off Broadway theatre which spent \$100,000 to open, couldn't get a building permit, whispers Gray, Post.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... Two Times readers urge the Lincoln Square theatre be named the Eugene O'Neill Theatre... Long Day's Journey Into Night should not have been produced for 25 years after the author's death as he originally requested, points out actor David Perkins in News letter. Reason was that he took liberties in portraying his family that he was ashamed of. O'Neill, Sr. was not a drunkard, Perkins corrected.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Candide would be fit US entry for April Paris festival, suggests Walker, News... If not for Shakespeare, Shaw and O'Neill, NY would have little to show in the straight drama department this season, sums up Chapman, News... 1956-57 musicals hark back to pure 1922, with the straight plays not far behind, concludes Kerr, Herald Tribune.

SECOND GUESSES... Troilus and Cressida gives the impression of being 2 or 3 plays jumbled together, and its satirical qualities tend to get lost in the shuffle, comments Donnelly, World Telegram & Sun. But critic thought Tyrone Guthrie Old Vic production the best presented by group. Director has managed to impose a glittering discipline on a random play.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES... Undershaft, Lear and Falstaff are the only 3 roles that could get Charles Laughton, Major Barbara, back to acting, he told Herridge, Post... Sammy Davis, Jr. could give up \$40,000 week salary in Las Vegas for a try at a Broadway show, Mr. Wonderful, because he believes that he had to do a Broadway show while he was still young. If he had waited to age 40, he told Donnelley, WT&S, you get stuck in whatever side of show business you are in.



OFF BROADWAY

The Shakespearewrights have been awarded \$1500 grant as first winner of Brandeis University Arts Award in Theatre... 9 by Six presentation of Barter Theatre, Abington, Va. closed at Open Stage... The Good Woman of Setzuan to close Jan 6 at Phoenix... Eagle Has 2 Heads gave week-end midnight performance for benefit of Off Broadway Association.

Capacity for Wings new comedy by M. C. Kurer to be presented at Royal Playhouse, 83 E 4 by Mark Productions with Willim Griffis, Patricia Falkenheim, William Bramley, Opens Jan 9... Revival of Wilde's An Ideal Husband to open Jan 10 at Carl Fischer Hall, W 57 for four successive evenings. George Armondo and Sully Rich are the producers of seldom seen play.

Symposium at Phoenix Jan 7 to feature John Houseman, Marchette Chute, John Gassner, Jack Landau discussing Measure... Christopher Fry's The First-born will be presented for one concert reading at YMHA Jan 6 for benefit of Aline Bernstein Fund to set up a permanent poetry center for the first presentation of verse plays... One woman Hamlet by Siobhan McKenna postponed. Third NY Chapter ANTA special De Lys bill to be, instead, Jan 22 with Eva Le Gallienne in "An Afternoon with Oscar Wilde."

Sh-h-h! farce by Harold Meyers presented at Chanin Auditorium, 122 E 42, was panned by Herridge, Post, and Donnelley, WT & S as frantic and unfunny. The Off-Broadway answer to Sixth Finger in a Five Fingered glove, summed up latter.



THEATRE

COOK

COMMENTS



"The Muses Are Heard" by Truman Capote (Random House) panned by Feld, Herald Tribune, for presenting a prejudice, would-be humorous, bad taste report on visit of Porgy and Bess cast to Russia. Russians could use it as slyly malicious portrait of American culture.

"Theatre World 1955-56" compiled by Dan Blum (Greenberg) offers most complete recap of season, okays Robo, Variety. Though current edition is harder to read than past due to smaller type sizes and blurred photos.

THEATRE

RECORD

COMMENTS

Saint Joan production at Phoenix with Siobhan McKenna 3 record set (RCA Victor) is admirably suited to recording, notes Kupferberg, Herald Tribune. Not all of star's intensity and radiance comes through in the records, he added.

"La Gingold" (Dolphin) features 12 special material songs of Hermione Gingold approved by Variety mugg. She has lots of wit and style, though a few numbers are on precious side.

" PROS & CONS BY TMK "

The River Line is a first rate Off Broadway production of just the type of serious, important, "non-commercial", script that the Off Broadway movement was originally designed for. It is a provocative play that remains fascinating inspite of some windy speeches in the first and third acts. Fully-rounded, intelligent, likeable characters are presented in an important philosophical situation, with a strong dash of melodrama thrown in as a bonus. The River Line is recommended to every serious Off Broadway fan.

* * *

Troilus and Cressida version of Shakespeare presented by Old Vic and staged by Tyrone Guthrie is a lusty, jazzed up, colorful farce on the Bard's original serious play. 1914 military costumes, a Helen of Troy to rival Mae West, goose-stepped bellboys all aid in turning the huge Winter Garden into an arena theatre for the talented cast and ambitious director. Without the skillful acting of the Old Vic company the production would rank as college amateur.

* * *

Purple Dust is a special and wonderful blend of slap-stick, satire and Sean O'Casey moulded together by inspired direction. Added ingredients of of dance and music keep the pace moving swiftly. The cast seems to run hot and cold, appearing at their best in the slapstick moments.

* * *

The annual attack on the critics, who are charged with closing shows, arrives early this year in the pretty form of Faye Emerson who claims the aisle-sitters closed her recent show, Protective Custody. The drama opened on Friday and closed after three performances on Saturday. For the record let it be stated that a decision of the producers, with nary a critic in attendance, decided to close the show. This play, like most shows, was budgetted for either quick success or quick closing. The producers evidently felt it was not wise to spend any more money promoting the play. Thus they, the producers, voted to close it. The solution is easy, and has nothing to do with critics pros and cons. Simply budget enough money to keep the show going inspite of the criticisms. But don't expect many producers to do this.

* * *

"Burlesque" was short-changed in its recent NY try. The long court fight of Tom Phillips to bring the pure virtues of the long-lost art back to NY theatre goers turned out to be more imaginative and interesting than the actual show itself. Tired comedy routines and comics were presented under the guise of "burlesque." Vaudeville, as Judy Garland, Danny Kaye, etc have proved, can win a place if tastefully presented. "Burlesque" deserves another, fresher, try

* * *

Broadway may be specializing in presenting theatre ideas of the 1920's, as several of the critics note this week, but Off Broadway for the first time in a long time took a giant step forward at the start of the new year. Both The River Line and Purple Dust are the type of plays that Off Broadway audiences have been crying for. congratulations to the producers of both shows for having a high opinion of the intelligence of theatre-goers.

* * *

